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ABSTRACT

This module contains a number of explanations and activities on appropriate phrases and intonation for telephone communication. The parts of the module cover the following: (1) telephone vocabulary, (2) parts of the telephone, (3) standard phrases used in all calls, (4) activities that occur in business calls, (5) speech communication problems during the call, (6) calls for special purposes, and (7) handling complications. Each part is subdivided into small activity sections, and is illustrated with comic-strip drawings. Each activity also has discussion questions and practice exercises. Three consolidation exercises and a reference list for the teacher complete the volume. (AMH)

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TELEPHONE GAMBITS

A Module for Teaching Telephone English to Second Language Learners

by James Fox and Howard B. Woods with Christine Deeble

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

For many second language learners, the ring of the telephone is a reason to hide. Aids to face-to-face conversation such as gestures, facial expressions, and situational contexts are missing from conversations on the phone. Meaning must be transmitted by words alone through a medium which distorts sound. Over the phone, second language learners must not only decipher sound patterns but they must also recognize contexts and levels of formality.

Using the telephone, with all its many complications, is however a necessary fact of life. The module *Telephone Gambits* is intended for second language learners who have already completed a 'basic English' program and who want to improve their ability to communicate on the phone.

A number of activities in *Telephone Gambits* draw the attention of students and teachers to an important aspect of communicative/functional English – the appropriateness of phrases and words in particular settings and for particular roles. Students will sound less abrupt and are less likely to be misunderstood if they learn appropriate usage. A full treatment of the sociolinguistic dimensions of usage would make this booklet far too academic and less useful in the classroom. We, therefore, encourage teachers to guide their students to an appreciation of the sociolinguistic dimensions of appropriate usage.

The following symbols have been used in *Telephone Gambits*:

● refers to Speaker 1
●● refers to Speaker 2
●●● refers to Speaker 3

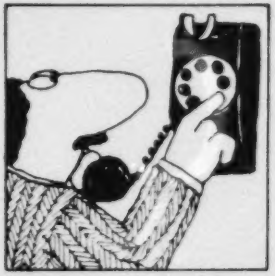
HAPPY *TELEFUN*NING!

Telephone Vocabulary

There is a specific vocabulary related to the use of the telephone. The following pictures illustrate some of this vocabulary. Read the descriptions under each picture and then do the exercise 'So What Happens?'.

VOCABULARY FOR THE BASIC CALL

He is *looking up a number in the directory (phone book).*



He is *dialing the number.*

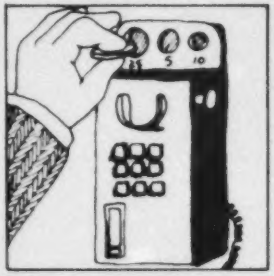
The phone is *ringing.*

She is *picking up the receiver.*

She is *on the phone.*

She has finished her call – she is *hanging up.*

IN A TELEPHONE BOOTH

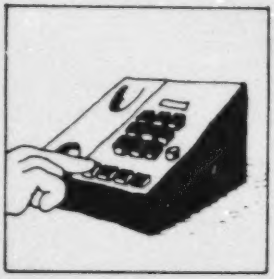


He is *depositing a coin.*

He is *listening for the dial tone.*

He is *pressing the coin return button.*

THE BUSINESS CALL



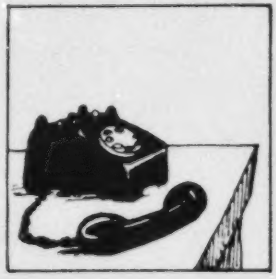
She is *pushing a button* and *connecting the call.*

The caller has to wait. – He is *holding.*

OTHER VOCABULARY

He can't complete his call. The *line is busy.* His call can't be connected.

She wants the other person to pay for this *long distance call* – she is *asking the operator to reverse the charges.*

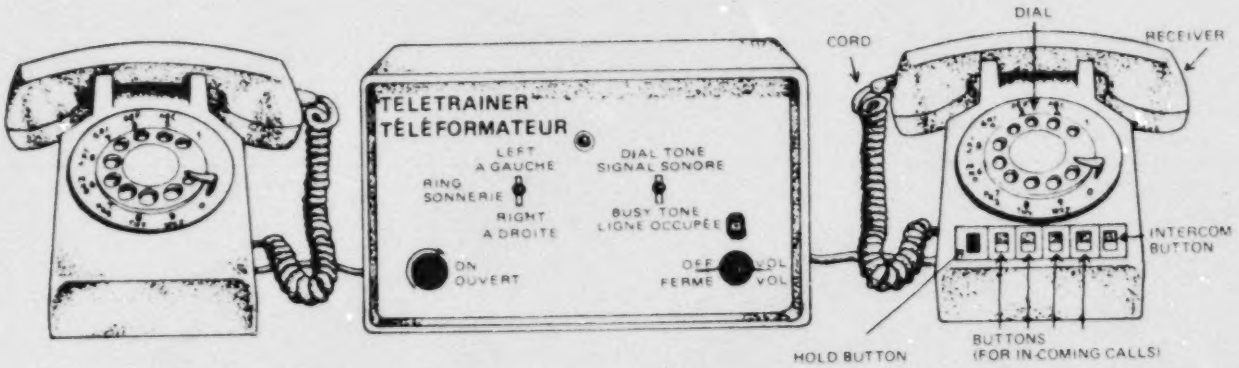


Someone left the phone *off the hook.*

So What Happens?

1. You have to call someone but don't know the number. What do you do?
2. Your phone is ringing. What do you do?
3. Every time you dial a number, you get a busy signal. What are some possible explanations?
4. You call an office. A receptionist answers and tells you that the person you are calling is *'on another line'*. You want to wait, so you tell the receptionist you want to _____.
5. You are calling long distance and want the person you are calling to pay. What do you say to the operator?
6. You are in a phone booth and want to make a call. What do you do after you have picked up the receiver?
7. You deposit 10 cents in the slot of a pay telephone. Nothing happens. What do you do?
8. You have finished your call and said goodbye. What do you do now?

Parts of the Telephone and Teletrainer



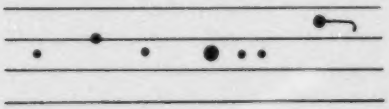
The Teletrainer consists of three main parts – two telephone sets and a console/amplifier. This amplifier allows class members to listen to exchanges between two people situated either inside or outside the classroom. Conversations can be recorded for playback from the sound produced by the console/amplifier.

All Calls

1. GREETINGS

The most common greeting on the telephone is 'Hello'. Receptionists often use more formal greetings such as 'Good morning, Dr. Anderson's office' to identify the office.

A greeting welcomes a call, and your tone of voice should be friendly. The following diagrams show the rise and fall – or intonation – of your voice. Notice that a rising intonation tends to express friendliness, and is especially suitable for greetings.



FRIENDLY

Good morning, National Foods.

NOT FRIENDLY

Good morning, National Foods.

BUSINESS 'HELLOS'

RECEPTIONIST:

Good morning, National Foods.

Information Services, bonjour.

Marcus, Walker, and Blair. May I help you?

Royal Hospital, Information.

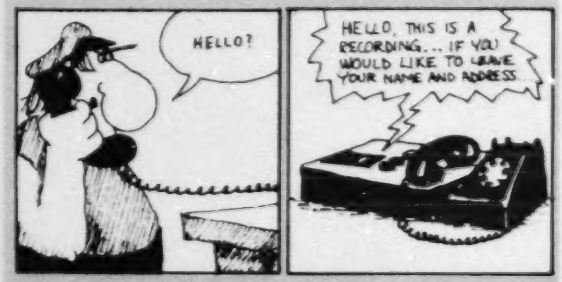
NO RECEPTIONIST:

Granville Motors, John Nelson speaking.

John Nelson speaking.

Nelson here.

Hello?



AT HOME:

Hello?

A MECHANICAL 'HELLO':

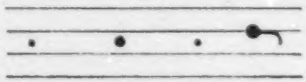
This is a recording . . .

Discussion Questions

1. In your own language would you use a different greeting expression for each of the situations in the pictures on p. 5?
2. In English, which greeting can be used in almost all situations?
3. Why is a greeting like 'Information Services, bonjour' particularly common for Federal Government offices?
4. Which greetings would receptionists use?
5. How would the receptionist at National Foods answer the phone in the afternoon or at night?
6. When *do* you say 'Good night'?
7. How do you react when you get a recorded message?
8. Give some examples of where recorded information is available. (eg. information on flights, etc.)
9. Do you feel at ease when you are asked to record a message? Why not?
10. Have you ever heard anyone use the expression 'Good day'? In what context or circumstances?

Activities

A Practise saying the greetings on p. 5 as politely as possible. Use this intonation pattern:



Marcus, Walker and Blair.

B Make up an appropriate greeting for the following situations.

1. June Madison, a receptionist, answering the office phone of the President of Dyno Corporation.
2. Bob Richards, a new waiter at Joe's Bar and Grill.
3. Dr. W.N. King, a university professor, answering his office phone.
4. Judy Samuel, a government liaison officer, responding to a call on her intercom.
5. Jennifer Neil, a receptionist in the Administration office.
6. Terry Jackson, a personnel officer, answering the phone in the absence of the receptionist.
7. Yourself at work.

2. ASKING FOR SOMEONE

The expressions which you use to ask to speak to someone are similar for all calls. The list to the right provides gambits for a variety of situations.

POSSIBLE FOR ALL CALLS:

May I speak to Mr. Stanley, please?
Could I speak to Edith Jones, please?
I'd like to speak with Bill Preston, please.
Is Frank in?
Is Joan there?

GOOD FOR CALLS ANSWERED BY RECEPTIONISTS:

I'd like to speak to someone who can give me information on . . .
Could you connect me with Dr. Ling, please?
Could you give me Mr. Rollins, please?

Activities

☐ Make up an exchange of *'greetings'* and *'asking for someone'* expressions for the situations below. One person answers with a greeting that identifies the place. The other person uses a greeting and then asks for a person who lives or works at that place.

Example:

TIME	PLACE
night	Toronto Globe and Mail office

- *Good evening, Globe and Mail.*
- ● *Hello, could I speak to the sports editor?*

	TIME	PLACE
1.	afternoon	Alcan, Public Relations Office.
2.	morning	City Hall, Information
3.	afternoon	Chargex Visa, Accounts Department.
4.	morning	Income Tax Information Office.
5.	morning	University of British Columbia, Registrar's Office.
6.	night	General Hospital, Emergency.
7.	night	Mirabel Airport, Air Canada Counter.

SELF-IDENTIFICATION EXPRESSIONS:
Speaking.
Yes, speaking.
Yes, this is Mrs. Fraser.
This is (s)he. *(very formal, pedantic)*

3. SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Often you answer the phone and the caller asks to talk to *you*. He says something like 'Is this . . .?' or 'Could I speak with . . .?' You need to identify yourself.

Activities

☐ In pairs complete the following dialogues. Use the filled-in parts to help you complete the other parts of the dialogue.

1. Greeting: . . .
   Asking for someone: *Chris Phillips, please.*
   Self-identification (you are that "someone"): . . .

2. Greeting: *Good evening, Gazette News desk.*
   Asking for someone: . . .
   Self-identification (you are that "someone"): . . .

3. Greeting: *Scotia Bank, Loans Department.*
   Asking for someone . . .
   Self-identification (you are that "someone"): . . .

4. CLOSINGS

There are several ways to end a conversation depending on the nature and context of the call. You may simply say 'Good-bye', or you may combine several of the expressions to the right.

Variations on the 'Good-bye' closing:

CLOSING EXPRESSIONS FOR ALL CALLS:

Good-bye.	**O.K. then.**	**See you next . . .**
Bye.	**See you.**	**Bye now.**
G'bye.	**See ya.**	**O.K. bye for now.**
B'bye.		

CLOSERS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES:

Keep in touch, eh?
Thanks for returning my call, bye.
I'm really glad you called, bye.
Thanks for calling, bye.
Talk to you later.
It was nice of you to call, bye.
Nice to hear from you again, bye.
I'll get back to you on that.

Activities

☐ Make up closing expressions for the following situations. It is common to combine a few closing expressions in order to gradually bring a conversation to an end. Make sure your response is appropriate.

1. You are ending a call with someone who had called you back.
2. You are ending a call with a friend you see regularly.
3. You have received a call of congratulations on your recent success.
4. You are ending a call containing some detailed information which you requested.
5. You are ending a call with a friend who has been out of the country for two years.

The Business Call

5. CONNECTING THE CALL

Frequently when you answer the phone the call is for someone else. You must first ask the caller to wait so that you can contact the person being called. To the right is a list of polite expressions for this purpose.

ASKING THE CALLER TO WAIT:

Just a minute, please.

One moment, please.

Just a moment, I'll connect you.

(Office procedures may require the receptionist to ask the identity of the caller and the reason for the call.)

GETTING MORE INFORMATION (OPTIONAL):

May I ask who's calling, please?

Could I tell him the nature of the call? *(formal)*

May I have your name, please?

Who should I say is calling, please?

(Before you connect a call, you tell the person which line the call is on, and you may also give the name of the caller and describe the nature of the call.)

CONNECTING THE CALL:

Excuse me, Mr. Tyler, you're wanted on line one.

Mrs. Smith, it's Ann Cooke on line three. (*Miss Cooke is known to the receptionist and to Mrs. Smith.*)

Yes, Mr. Foley, there's a Miss Hughes on line two for you. (*Miss Hughes is not known to the receptionist.*)

Sheila, could you take line four? There's a Mr. Wilder on the line, and he wants to speak to you about a book order.

A call for you on line two.

Line two, please. *(Busy switchboard.)*

A Mrs. Garcia on line one.

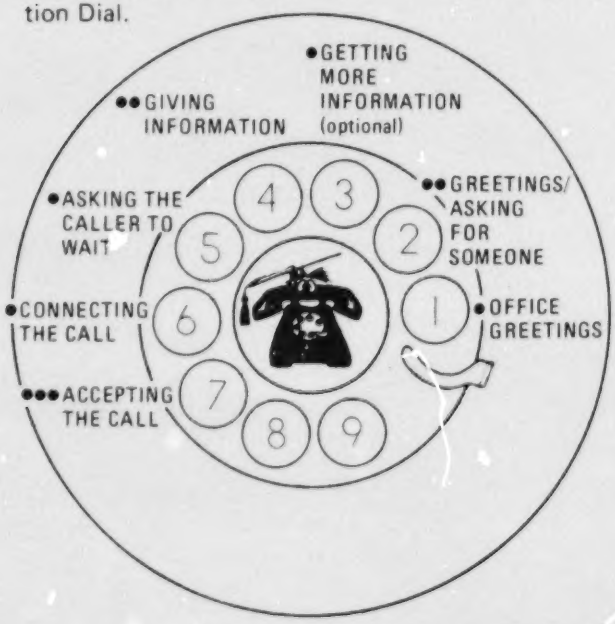
There is someone for you on line three.

Activities

A Fill in the following dialogue and then practise reading it to the class. Refer to the expressions for connecting the call.

- ● Accounts Department.
- ●● Hello, _____ speak _____ Mr. Taylor, please?
- ● May I ask _____ and _____?
- ●● It's Frank Bain and _____.
- ● Thank you. One moment _____. (*to Mr. Taylor*) Mr. Taylor there's _____ _____ and he wants to talk to you about _____.

B In groups of three, write and practise a dialogue which includes the steps on the Function Dial.



C In groups of three write and practise a dialogue for each of the following situations. Then present one of your dialogues to the class.

1. A patient calls his dentist about a toothache. A receptionist answers the call and advises the dentist of the nature of the call before connecting the patient.
2. A person calls a colleague to get information about a staff meeting. A receptionist answers and advises the colleague of the nature of the call.

6. HOLDING

If the person being called is busy, you may ask to put the caller *on hold*. In this case, you should say something to the caller before putting him on hold.

Discussion Questions

1. There are a number of short expressions which you use on the telephone and in face-to-face conversation to ask someone to wait. Below are several expressions and a table. Put a check for each expression in the appropriate column or columns. Also, mark the formal expressions with an 'f' and the informal ones with an 'i'.

	TELEPHONE	FACE-TO-FACE
Wait a minute, please		
Could you hold		
Hold on a minute		
Just a second		
Hang on		

2. What is the longest time a caller should be left on hold with no further communication from the receptionist?

PUTTING ON HOLD:

I'm sorry he's on another line. Would you care to hold?

All the lines are busy. Do you want to hold?

Would you mind holding? She's on her way back to her office.

(If the caller has had to hold for a long time, you should use one of the following expressions.)

CONTINUING ON HOLD:

She is still on the other line. Would you care to continue holding or could I take a message?

I'm sorry her line is still busy. Do you want to continue holding?

I'm afraid his line is still busy. Would you care to keep on holding?

She's still not available. Do you want to continue holding?

(Before you finally connect the call, you should use one of the following expressions.)

TAKING OFF HOLD:

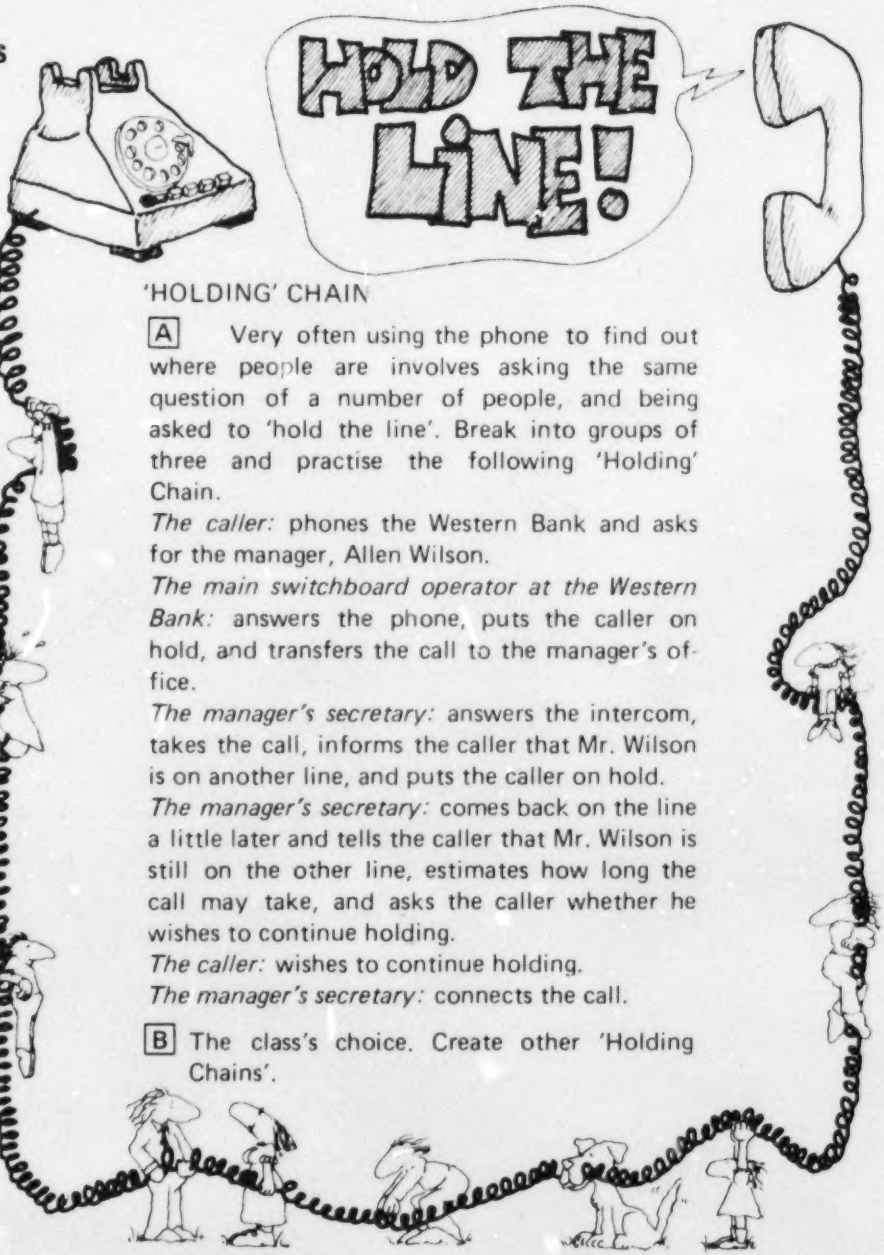
She can speak to you now.

He's finished his call. I'll put you through now.

I can put you through now.

I'll connect you now.

Activities



'HOLDING' CHAIN

A Very often using the phone to find out where people are involves asking the same question of a number of people, and being asked to 'hold the line'. Break into groups of three and practise the following 'Holding' Chain.

The caller: phones the Western Bank and asks for the manager, Allen Wilson.

The main switchboard operator at the Western Bank: answers the phone, puts the caller on hold, and transfers the call to the manager's office.

The manager's secretary: answers the intercom, takes the call, informs the caller that Mr. Wilson is on another line, and puts the caller on hold.

The manager's secretary: comes back on the line a little later and tells the caller that Mr. Wilson is still on the other line, estimates how long the call may take, and asks the caller whether he wishes to continue holding.

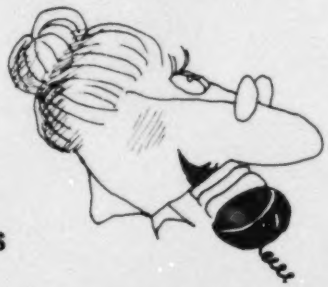
The caller: wishes to continue holding.

The manager's secretary: connects the call.

B The class's choice. Create other 'Holding Chains'.

7. OFFERING TO TAKE A MESSAGE

Sometimes the person you call is not in his office so you leave a message. At other times you may have to take a message for a colleague. Usually the person who answers the phone offers to take a message but the caller can also ask to leave a message.



Activities

A The offer to take a message is usually part of a larger statement. Combine the parts of Teleframe 1 into offers to take a message.

OFFERING:

Could I take a message?
Is there any message?
Would you care to leave a message?
If you like I can take a message.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO LEAVE A MESSAGE:

No thanks, I'll call back later.
When is he likely to be back? I'll call him then.
No thanks, I'll try later.
Can you tell me when he'll be back?
Can you tell me when you expect her back?

IF YOU WANT THE CALL RETURNED:

Could you ask him to call Keith Hayes at 965-3521?
Please have him call Cheryl Adams at 965-3521.

IF THE MESSAGE IS URGENT:

Could you please get the message to him as soon as possible?
Could you make sure he gets the message right away?
It's really important that she get this message as soon as possible.

TELEFRAME 1

POLITE GAMBIT (APOLOGY)	EXPLANATION	OFFER TO TAKE MESSAGE
I'm sorry	she's at a meeting.	Could I take a message?
I'm afraid	he's sick today.	Is there any message?
Sorry but	she's out to town until	

B As one member of the class offers to take a message another responds by leaving a message. The person taking the message writes it on the message pad and delivers it verbally to another student.

EXPRESSIONS FOR THE CALLER:

Could you tell him that . . .
Thanks, please tell her that . . .
Yes, please let him know that . . .

EXPRESSIONS FOR REPORTING THE MESSAGE:

He called to tell you that . . .
He phoned to say . . .
He called to let you know that . . .

Example:
Caller: Mrs. Murphy
Message: Can meet with Mr. Conroy at noon tomorrow.

- Information Branch, good morning.
- •• I'd like to speak to Mr. Conroy, please.
- I'm sorry he's in a meeting all day today. Could I take a message?
- •• Yes, this is Mrs. Murphy. Could you tell him that I will be able to meet with him at noon tomorrow?
- Right, O.K., I'll do that.
- •• Thank you, good-bye.
- G'bye.

Create dialogues for the following situations:

1. *Caller:* Pete, the mechanic at Mike's Motors.
   Message for: Mrs. White.
   Message: Car is ready.
2. *Caller:* Mary Curtis, an employee.
   Message for: Janet Thompson, the boss.
   Message: Sick today.
3. *Caller:* John Mansfield, job applicant.
   Message for: Tim Swain, Personnel Officer.
   Message: Decided not to accept job offer.
4. *Caller:* Anne Richards, Committee member.
   Message for: Amy Chang, Committee Chairperson.
   Message: Will be late for meeting.
5. *Caller:* Don Andrews.
   Message for: Harry McRae, Travel Agent.
   Message: Cancel flight to London.
6. Make up your own situation.

C Standard business practice requires that receptionists sometimes use indirect explanations to explain a person's absence. Rather than saying 'he's still out to lunch', or 'I have no idea where she is', they may prefer to use expressions like these:

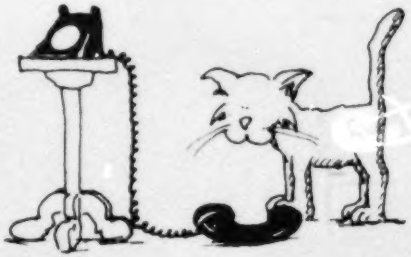
I am sorry she's in a meeting for the next hour.
I'm afraid she's away from the office this afternoon.
He should be back any minute. He just stepped out.
She's not in her office at the moment.
He is not available at the moment.

Suppose you were answering an office telephone. Make up an appropriate explanation for the absence of a person who is:

1. in the office (but does not want to be disturbed)
2. at lunch (it's 2:30)
3. away from the office (but you don't know where or why)
4. at a job interview

8. SUGGESTING SOMEONE ELSE

When a caller wants to speak to someone who has left the organisation or who is away for a long time, the receptionist suggests that he speak to someone else.



Activities

A Suggesting someone else is usually part of a larger statement. Combine the parts of Teleframe 2 to suggest someone else.

TELEFRAME 2

GAMBIT	EXPLANATION	SUGGESTING SOMEONE ELSE OR OFFERING YOUR OWN HELP
I'm sorry I'm afraid I guess you didn't know that	he is no longer with us. she doesn't work here any more. he is on education leave for 3 months. she has transferred to a new job.	Perhaps I could help you? Could someone else be of help?

OFFERING YOUR OWN HELP:

Perhaps I could help you.

Could I help you?

If you could tell me what it's about, maybe I could help you.

SUGGESTING SOMEONE ELSE:

Miss James is handling his business. Would you like to speak to her?

Mr. Caron is filling in for him this week. Do you want to speak to him?

If you tell me what you're calling about, perhaps I could suggest someone else.

Mrs. Jackson may be able to help you.

Would you like to speak with Mr. White, the new . . .

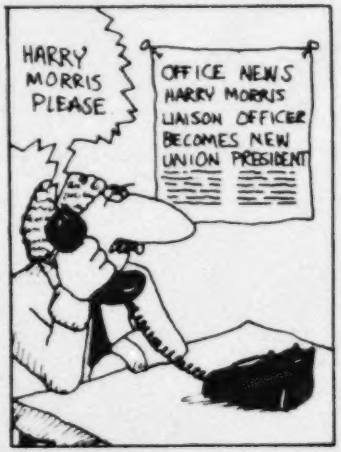
Could someone else be of assistance?

B Use Teleframe 2 in Activity A as a model. and give a response for handling a call for someone who:

1. is away on vacation
2. is on maternity leave
3. has been transferred to a different city
4. is in the hospital
5. has retired
6. was recently fired
7. has recently been promoted

21

C For each of the situations in the pictures what would the receptionist say? Write a response in the spaces provided.



9. DO YOU HAVE HIS NUMBER?

For one reason or another the person being called may be at another number. A good receptionist can generally provide the caller with the appropriate number.

ASKING FOR THE OTHER NUMBER:

Do you happen to have his number?
Would you know her number by any chance?
Could you please give me his number?
Could you tell me her new number?
Could you tell me where I can reach him?

PROVIDING THE OTHER NUMBER:

You can reach him at 342-7895 extension 27.
That number has been changed to 342-7895.
One moment please, I'll find her new number for you . . . yes, it's 342-7895.
He's not at this number, you'll have to call information for his new listing.
She's at a different extension. Could you try 366, please?

Activities

A English, unlike some other languages, requires that each digit of a phone number be given individually.
The area code is 8-1-6- and then 5-2-3- 6-2-3-1
Practise giving the following numbers to other members of the class who should check that they have heard correctly by repeating the number:
(516) 823-1058*
(137) 942-1973
(613) 547-3300

*Zero is commonly pronounced '0'.

B BUREAUCRATIC RUNAROUND

Situation: Conrad White is a bureaucrat who is impossible to locate. He has been receiving promotions, reassignments, secondments, transfers, and leaves. The number you have for him is 746-4125.
Roles: One person in the class takes the part of the caller, other class members receive and refer the calls. In each case, give different explanations for why Mr. White is no longer there and where he might be reached.

10. REFERRALS

Sometimes a caller may ask for information rather than for a particular person. If you can not supply the information, you should refer the caller to someone who can.

ASKING FOR INFORMATION:

Could you give me information on . . .?

I wonder if you could tell me about . . .?

I'd appreciate it if you could give me some information about . . .

I'm phoning to inquire about . . .

I'd like to know if . . .

I'd like to talk to someone who has information on . . .

May I talk to someone about . . .?

REFERRALS:

I'm sorry, we don't have that information. I suggest you call . . .

I'm afraid you have the wrong department. Maybe you should try . . .

Let me connect you with Mr. Smart, who may have the answer.

I think Ms. Collins would be the best person to handle that.

In that case, the person you want is Dr. van Dusen.

Activities

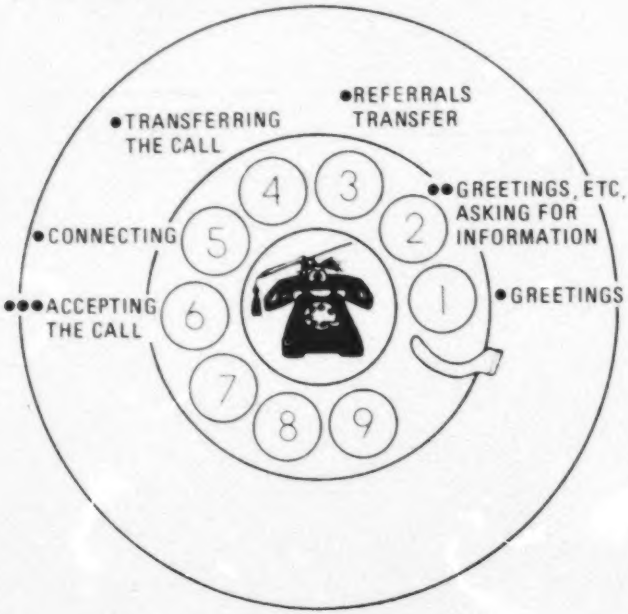
Standard business practice requires that a caller introduce himself and identify his place of work before asking for information.

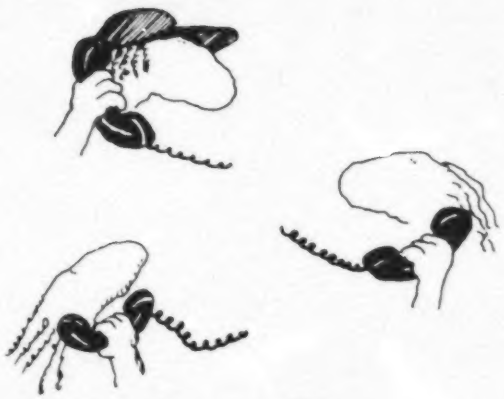
Look at Teleframe 3 and do the Activity on p. 20.

TELEFRAME 3

GREETING	SELF INTRODUCTION	IDENTIFICATION OF PLACE OF WORK	ASKING FOR INFORMATION
Hello.	My name is Brian Stokes.	I'm with the Pay Office.	Could you tell me if anybody in your section worked overtime last month?

☐ In groups of three, prepare and practise a dialogue which includes the steps on the Function Dial.





Situations

John Dent/University of Manitoba/program for the TESL Canada conference.

Margaret Watson/consumer group/toy safety standards from the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Tim Hanes/East End Tenants Association/copy of the Landlord and Tenants Act from the Ombudsman.

Sara Cummings/Phoenix Travel Agency/duty-free customs regulations from Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise.

11. RETURNING A CALL

When a person calls while you are away someone else takes a message for you. Then it's up to you to return the call.

Activities

At times a call may not be returned for several hours or even days. In this case you may want to explain the delay diplomatically. Look at Teleframe 4, and do the Activity.

RETURNING A CALL

This is Brian Black returning your call.

This is Louise Farr. Sorry I missed your call yesterday.

Jack Burns calling. I believe you called me yesterday.

Is this Mr. Jacobs? I have a message asking me to call you back.

RETURNING A CALL (INFORMAL):

Hi, it's Bernie. You called?

Hi, it's me. What's up?*

☐ How would you return calls delayed for the following reasons?

1. you misplaced the message
2.* your receptionist forgot to give you the message
3.* you put off calling for several days
4. you have been on holiday
5.* you have been too busy
6. you have been out of town

*Use discretion.

TELEFRAME 4

GREETING	RETURNING THE CALL	EXCUSING THE DELAY	EXPLANATION
Hello, Mr. Erlandson.	This is Dorothy Briggs.	I'm sorry I'm so late in returning your call.	I've been out of town for several days.
Hi, Suzanne.	Its Joe.	I'm sorry I couldn't get back to you.	I've been in meetings for the last couple of hours.

During The Call

DOUBT:
Hmm.
Oh?
Mm.
Well . . .

12. I'M FOLLOWING YOU

In face-to-face conversations you can respond to what you hear by smiling, frowning, or shrugging your shoulders. On the telephone, however, you can not convey a message using facial expressions or other body language. Instead, you must indicate that you are following by using short words and sounds which do not impede the flow of the conversation. Without this feedback, the speaker may not know if you are following him (or even if you are still there). The following lists provide a variety of possible reactions.

DISAGREEMENT:
Uh-uh.↘
Hnn.
No way.
Aw, come on!

SURPRISE:
Really?
What?
Huh?
No kidding!

AGREEMENT:
Mm-hmm.
Uh-huh.↗
Nh-hnn.↗
Yeah.
Right.
Sure.
I'll say.
Exactly.

DELIGHT:
Wow!
Great!
Gee!
Terrific!
Fantastic!
Hey!
Neat!

DISGUST:
Hmph!
Yech!
Yuck!
Euh!
Bleah!
Jeez!
(Oh) Great!

Activities

A Listening Check: Do you understand the meaning of the sounds? As your teacher reads five sounds at random from the lists of agreement and disagreement, indicate what each sound expresses by putting a check in the correct box.

	a	b	c	d	e
agreement					
disagreement					

Repeat the procedure with six sounds from the lists of surprise, delight and disgust.

	a	b	c	d	e	f
surprise						
delight						
disgust						

B Use a sound or short expression to respond to the following comments. As one person reads, another responds. Express your true feelings.

1. "Ottawa is the most beautiful city in Canada."
2. "Bobby Orr is the greatest hockey player ever."
3. "Income tax isn't high enough considering all the benefits we receive from living in Canada."
4. "Labrador belongs to Newfoundland."
5. "Labrador belongs to Quebec."
6. "Winter in Canada is too short."
7. "The best thing for breakfast is peanut butter mixed with raw eggs and vinegar."
8. "I just heard from our boss that you're getting a 20% raise."

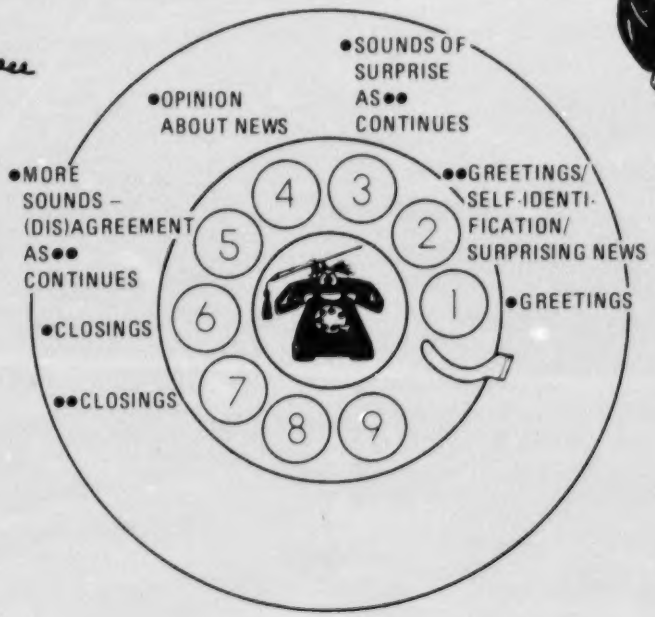
C Can you add to the lists of expressions and sounds?

D What sounds might these speakers be making?

E Pronounce the agreement sounds in different ways. Can you make sounds to express both *mild* and *strong* agreement? Try the same with the disagreement sounds.

F In pairs write and practise a dialogue which follows the steps on the Function Dial below.

POSSIBLE SURPRISING NEWS:
You have decided to get married.
You have decided to get into politics.
Vancouver has just been destroyed by an earthquake.
The Conservatives won Quebec in a landslide.



13. RESTATEMENT

Given the limitations of the telephone, you will often want to check that you have heard the information correctly. You can check by restating or summarizing essential information.

REPEATING FACTS:

That was . . . wasn't it?
That was . . . ?
Was that . . . ?
'On the eight floor . . .'
'Ten o'clock', eh?
Did you say . . . ?

SUMMARIZING IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

So what you're saying is . . .
You mean . . . ?
Are you saying . . . ?

Activities

A The expression 'So what you're saying is. . .' is used to summarize. The expression 'That was' is usually used for repeating information. Use the correct expression to summarize or repeat the information in the following exercise.

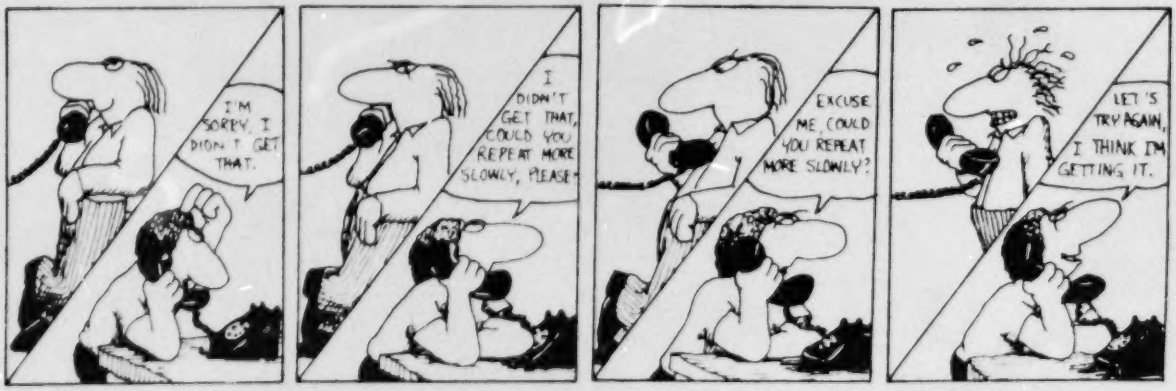
1. "354 River Road"
   (You want to make sure you heard the address correctly.)
2. "The meeting will run all afternoon." (You want to know if you will be able to return to the office.)
3. "From 8:30 to 4:45."
   (You want to confirm the business hours.)
4. "The chair costs $32.00 and the bed $120.00" (You want to check the total price).

FOR SPELLING ON THE TELEPHONE
Use this or make up your own list of names when needed.

A	as in Adam	N	as in Nancy
B	as in Baker	O	as in Otto
C	as in Charlie	P	as in Peter
D	as in David	Q	as in Queen
E	as in Edward	R	as in Robert
F	as in Frank	S	as in Susan
G	as in George	T	as in Thomas
H	as in Henry	U	as in Union
I	as in Ida	V	as in Victor
J	as in James	W	as in William
K	as in King	X	as in X-ray
L	as in Lewis	Y	as in Yankee
M	as in Mary	Z	as in Zebra

B When spelling a name or address over the phone a speaker commonly pauses after every two or three letters or numbers and often breaks a word into syllables. Dictate the following names and addresses to the rest of the class. They should write down what they hear and check what they hear by using restatement expressions.

1. your own name and address
2. Judge Geoffrey Jamieson
   1358 Cooper Street
   Edmonton, Alberta T1Y 0K6
3. George Jefferson
   1739 Harvard Hamlet, Estevan,
   Saskatchewan P6R 3K5
4. Dr. Karen Parker
   658 – 10 The Driveway
   Moncton, New Brunswick
   D5F 4S9


I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T GET THAT.
I DIDN'T GET THAT, COULD YOU REPEAT MORE SLOWLY, PLEASE?
EXCUSE ME, COULD YOU REPEAT MORE SLOWLY?
LET'S TRY AGAIN, I THINK I'M GETTING IT.

14. I'M NOT FOLLOWING YOU

You have probably been in situations similar to the one pictured in the sequence on p. 26 and maybe you did not know a variety of expressions for asking the speaker to repeat. Consequently, you may have had to rely on an abrupt-sounding 'What?'.
You will find the expressions in the list to the right useful when asking for a repetition.

Activities

☐ Make up a complete statement requesting a repetition. (Refer to Teleframe 5).

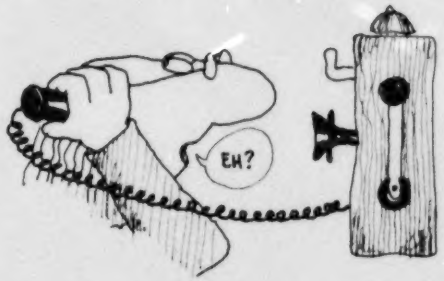
Example:

Someone just turned on a radio.

- I'm sorry. Someone just turned on a radio. Could you say that again?

REQUESTS FOR REPETITION:

I'm sorry I didn't understand that.
Could you spell that, please?
Would you mind repeating that?
I didn't get that, could you say it more slowly, please?
Excuse me, could you repeat more slowly?
I'm afraid I didn't get that?
Let's try again, I think I'm getting it.



1. A train just passed.
2. Someone is knocking on your door.
3. It's your first call in English.
4. There is interference on the line.
5. Someone came into your office.

TELEFRAME 5

GAMBIT	EXPLANATION	REQUEST FOR REPETITION
I'm sorry Excuse me, but I'm afraid Sorry, but	**General:** I didn't get that. I didn't hear that. I didn't understand that. **Specific:** I don't speak English very well. my English is not very good.	Could you repeat that, please? Would you mind repeating that? Could you say that more slowly, please?

'CALL BACK' REQUESTS:
Could I call you back?
Do you think I could call you back?
Can I get back to you a little later?
Do you mind if I call you back?
Can I phone you back in a few minutes?

15. COULD I CALL YOU BACK?

Sometimes you don't have time to talk or you are in the middle of doing something. You may also simply want to delay talking to that particular caller. In these situations, you ask to phone the caller back at a more convenient time.

Activities

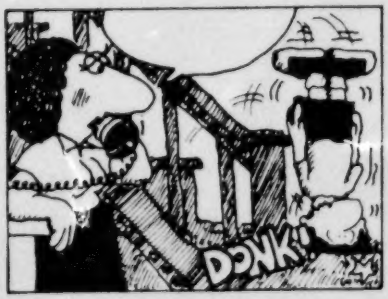
A A *'Call back'* request is usually part of a larger statement. Combine the parts of Teleframe 6 into complete statements for the situations listed.

1. Someone is at the door.
2. Someone just came into your office.
3. You are in the middle of a meeting with your boss.
4. Your taxi has just arrived.
5. You are already late for a meeting.
6. There is a long distance call on the other line.

TELEFRAME 6

GAMBIT (APOLOGY)	EXPLANATION	'CALL BACK' REQUEST
I'm sorry but Excuse me Sorry, I can't talk now	someone is at the door. I'm in a meeting.	Could I call you back? Can I get back to you a little later?

B What might the people in the following pictures be saying? Make up complete responses (including a polite gambit, explanation, and *'Call back'* request) and write them in the space below.



16. CHECKING ON SOMETHING

Suppose somebody calls you with a question like: "Could you give me your division's expenditures for fiscal year 1977?" You have the information that the person wants, but you have to find it in a file. You will have to leave the telephone and do a quick search.

SHORT TIME NEEDED:

Just a moment, I'll get you that information.
Could you hold the line, I'll check.
Please hold a second, I'll see.
Just a second, I'll check.
Hold on a moment, please.

LONGER TIME NEEDED:

Could I call you back on that in a few minutes?
Would you mind if I got back to you on that in a few minutes?
How about if I call you back in a few minutes?
Would you like to hold or should I call you back after I've checked?

Activities

A What are some possible responses to the *'Short time needed'* and *'Longer time needed'* expressions? Read from the list of gambits with another student responding with an appropriate comment.

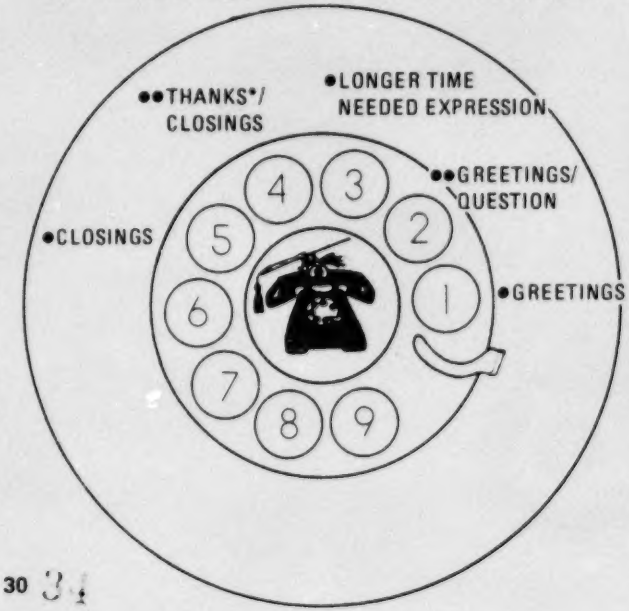
Example:

- Could you hold the line while I check?
- I'm sorry I'm in a rush and can't wait.
- Could you call me back with that information?

***Some expressions of thanks for this context are:**

Thanks, I'd appreciate that.
Sure, thanks for your help.
O.K.! I'll be expecting your call.

B In pairs write and practise a dialogue which includes the steps on the Function Dial below:



Calls for Special Purposes

EMERGENCY:
This is an emergency.

17. THE EMERGENCY CALL

On the telephone a person reports an emergency with one fixed expression – 'This is an emergency.'
This expression indicates as clearly and as quickly as possible that someone needs help. You should follow up this opening statement with a clear description of the details of the emergency:

1. what has happened,
2. the location of the emergency,
3. your name,
4. your address.

Speak slowly and carefully. Remember that, in the event of an emergency, you can dial '0' for the operator and be connected with the police, fire department, etc. Of course, if you know the emergency numbers (there is usually space to list them on the inside cover of the telephone book) you can dial them directly.

Activities

☐ THE EMERGENCY
Using the following lists, take turns reporting an emergency.

Emergency number:	*Emergency:*
doctor	colleague has collapsed
poison information centre	fire, drowning
fire department	purses and wallets stolen
ambulance	mistakenly drank bleach
police station	car accident
hospital	found a dead body

18. LONG DISTANCE

It is possible to dial most long distance calls directly. However, some long distance calls require the assistance of an operator. Calls which require assistance from the operator include:

1. person-to-person calls,
2. collect calls (the caller reverses the charges),
3. overseas calls.

When you talk to the operator, he will probably ask the number you are calling, your telephone number and your name. If it's a person-to-person call, he will ask the name of the person you are calling.

PERSON-TO-PERSON:

I'd like to make a person-to-person call to Sam Kincaid at area code 318, 455-7021.

This is a person-to-person call to Irene Miles at area code 759, 263-1380.

REVERSING THE CHARGES:

I'd like to make a collect call to Sol Gould area code 852, 806-9951. My name is Mike Draper.

I'd like to call Lois Banks at area code 406, . . . 543-3646, and please reverse the charges. My name is Betty Young.

OVERSEAS CALLS:

I'd like to make an overseas call to Brussels, Belgium, the Canadian Embassy, the number is 997-1580, extension 448.

Activities

☐ Complete the following dialogue of a person-to-person collect call.

Operator: Operator
You: (Give the name and number of the person you are calling, and say that you want to reverse the charges).
Operator: Your name and the number you're calling from, please.
You: . . .
Operator: Thank you. (pause)
The Person you are calling: Hello?
Operator: I have a long distance call for . . . (the name of the person) from (your name).
Will you accept the charges?
The Person you are calling: Yes I will, thank you operator.
Operator: Go ahead, please.

19. MAKING AN APPOINTMENT

Often when you call an office for an appointment, the receptionist schedules a time. At other times you make an appointment directly with the person you want to see. You need to indicate:

1. that you want to make an appointment
2. whom you want to see
3. the purpose of the meeting
4. a convenient time

Activities

A Make up complete appointment requests, using the gambits and the situations below.

APPOINTMENT		REQUEST
I'd like to make an appointment	*with* + or *to see*	**name of person** Dr. Jones Miss Anderson you **position of person** the director the doctor **name unknown** somebody who can give me information about . . .

MAKING AN APPOINTMENT:
I'd like to make an appointment with . . .
Could I please make an appointment to see . . .
Would it be possible to see . . . ?
I'd like to set up an appointment with . . .
Could I schedule an appointment with . . . ?

B Fill in the balloons with an appropriate appointment-making gambits.

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20. RESERVATIONS

You can make reservations for many different things (e.g. hotel rooms, dinner, theatre seats, airline tickets) but the expressions which introduce a reservation request are much the same. The person taking your reservation will ask you your name, the time you want the reservation, the number of people, any special preferences, etc.

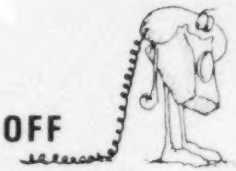
MAKING RESERVATIONS:
I'd like to make reservations for . . .
I'd like to reserve . . .
Would it be possible to make reservations for . . .?
I'd like to book . . .
Could you reserve . . .?
(To cancel reservations substitute 'cancel' for the verbs 'make', 'reserve', or 'book'.)

Activities

☐ Make up reservation requests for the following places or things.

1. 1st class seat on flight to Halifax/11:45 a.m.
2. table for two/next to fireplace/noon
3. hotel room/honeymoon suite/May 27
4. roomettes on a train/for four to Vancouver/August 31
5. theatre tickets/location: box/8:00 p.m.
6. your own reservation

Complications



21. GETTING CUT OFF

What do you do when the line goes dead? When you get cut off, you need to redial. In order to start the conversation again, you can use one of the expressions to the right.

STARTING AGAIN:

Hello again, I guess we were cut off.

Hi, I don't know what happened; the line went dead.

Hi, it's me again. I wonder what happened.

I'm sorry I cut you off. I pressed the wrong button.

TELEFRAME 7

Activities

[A] If you are responsible for cutting off a call, you will need a few expressions to start again. Refer to Teleframe 7 and make up scripts for the following situations.

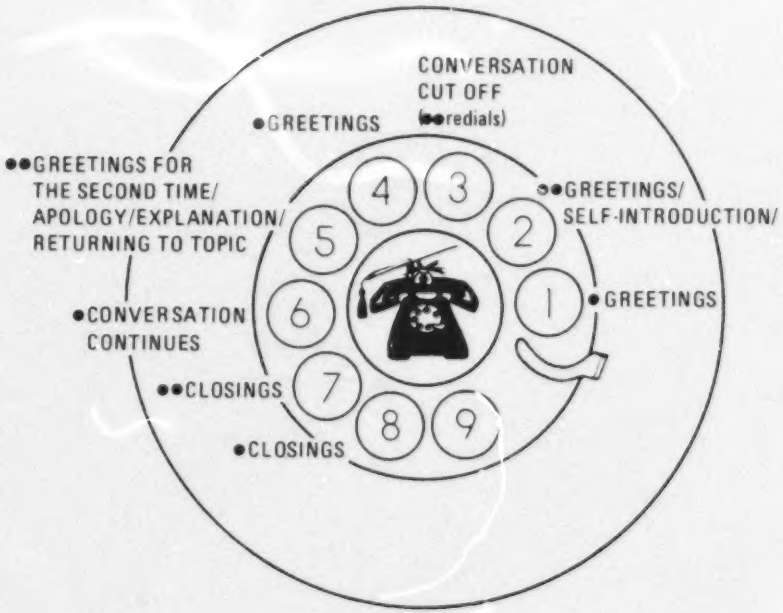
1. While putting a second caller on hold, you disconnected the first caller.
2. You accidentally pressed the wrong button.
3. The switchboard operator accidentally put another call through on your extension.
4. The phone fell off the desk.

GREETINGS (for the second time)	APOLOGY	EXPLANATION	RETURNING TO TOPIC
Hello, again. It's me again.	Sorry about that I'm sorry for cutting you off. You're not going to believe this but . . .	I accidentally pressed the wrong button. I dropped the phone.	You were telling me about . . . Where were we? Getting back to . . .

B Use the situations below to begin a conversation which is then cut off. The caller must redial and start the conversation again.
Follow the steps on the Function Dial.

SITUATIONS:

1. Dr. Parker's office/test results back/make an appointment
2. Ernie's Garage/car parts needed/three weeks' delay.
3. Travel Agent/holiday booked/hotel twice the listed rate.
4. Friend/bought new house/gives details.



22. A BAD CONNECTION

Interference on the line can make talking on the phone difficult or impossible. In the case of a bad connection, the caller usually offers to redial or to call the operator for assistance.

OFFERING TO CALL BACK:

We've got a bad line. I'll call you right back.

I can't hear you very well. Could I call you back?

Something's wrong with the phone. Could I call you back?

This line is terrible. Can I call you back?

Activities

A In pairs, prepare and practise a conversation which is disrupted by interference. Follow the steps of the Function Dial.

B In pairs, write and practise a dialogue which contains all the elements of the following situation:

BACKGROUND: You made a long distance call. During the call, the line faded. You decided to hang up.

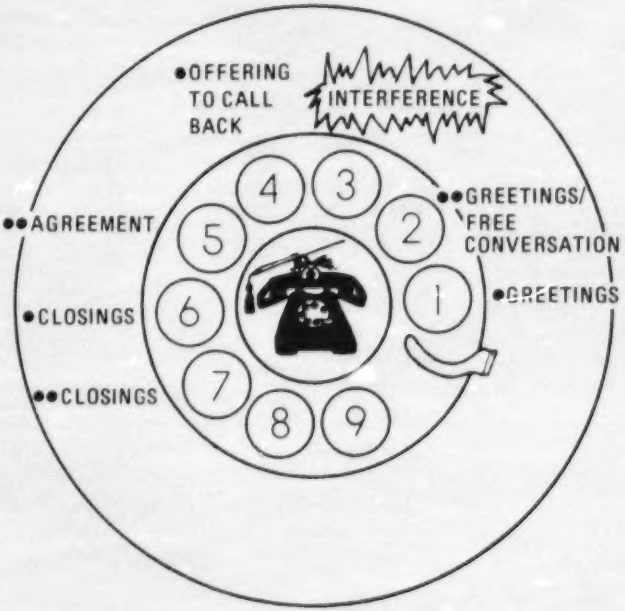
CONVERSATION:

You: call the operator and ask for assistance.

The operator: offers to redial.

You: give the operator the number you were calling;
ask not to be billed for the first call.

The operator: reassures you that you will not be billed, asks for your home number, and then redials;
reconnects you with your party.



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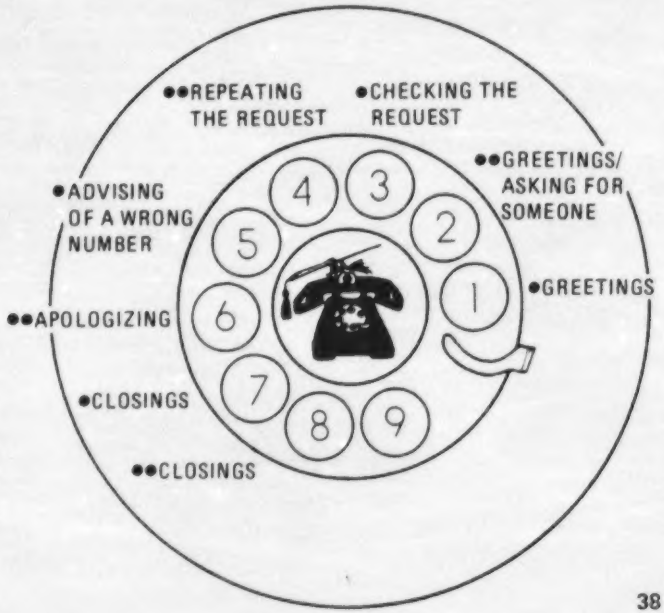
23. WRONG NUMBER

Suppose you answer the phone and a caller asks for somebody you do not know. Your first reaction is surprise and then you try to correct the situations using the gambits to the right.

Activities

A In pairs, prepare and practise a dialogue which includes the steps on the Function Dial.



ADVISING OF A WRONG NUMBER:
I'm afraid you've got the wrong number.
There's no one with that name here.
You must have the wrong number.

CHECKING THE REQUEST:
What number were you trying to reach?
Are you sure you have the right number?
Who? What was that name again?
Would you repeat that again?
Who was that again?

APOLOGIZING:
Oh, I'm sorry, I must have dialed the wrong number.
Oh, excuse me.
Oh, I'm sorry.
Oh, sorry to have bothered you.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE APOLOGY:
That's O.K.
That's alright.
Don't mention it.
No problem.
Sorry I couldn't help.

B INFORMATION GAP

When you reach a wrong number you've got to find out what went wrong. Sometimes (especially when you are dealing with a large organisation) you can solve the problem by asking for help. Get the information you need by filling the information gap in the following situation.

Roles:

Speaker A. A business contact gave you the number 238-7035 for Robert Stevens, sales representative for Allied Aircraft Ltd.

Speaker B. You are Stephen Finch, an engineer with Allied Aircraft. Your number is 238-7035. The general information number for Allied Aircraft is 238-7020.

Task:

Speaker A. dials 238-7035. Speaker B. answers and informs speaker A. that he has the wrong number. Speaker A. explains who he is trying to reach. Speaker B. suggests a solution to the problem.

24. HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Some people are more agressive over the phone than they would be in a face-to-face situation. Their complaints may be reasonable or unreasonable, but everyone who answers the phone should be able to handle such difficult situations. The lists to the right provide gambits for a variety of tactics.

Activities

☐ In pairs, make up dialogues for the following situations.

1. A caller complains about an overcharge on a car rental bill which you sent to him.
2. A caller complains about being left 'on hold'. He has redialed. You had put him on hold the first time.
3. A caller complains about a Branch policy which requires that members of the public pay for copies of a report. The caller wants a free copy.
4. A caller wants to know why you haven't responded to her letter of complaint. You have not received the letter.
5. A caller complains about the phones not being answered during noon hour.

LISTENING TACTFULLY:

Oh, I see.

Yes, I understand.

Yes, mh-hmm. (See page 23 for other appropriate sounds)

CLARIFYING THE SITUATION:

Do you mean to tell me that . . .

So what you're saying is . . .

So, what happened was . . .

Do you mean to say . . .

In other words . . .

DELAYING:

I'd like to check this out; can I call you back?

I'll have to check this out with the supervisor; could I call you back?

If you'd like to discuss this further, we can make an appointment.

Please send me this information in writing.

ADMITTING AN ERROR, OFFERING CORRECTION:

I'm sorry for the trouble this has caused you; we will . . .

I'm sorry this happened. Would you care to . . .

We are sorry for the inconvenience. We will . . .

We regret any inconvenience this may have caused you. If you like we'll . . .

SORRY, BUT NO:

I understand your point, but there is nothing that can be done.

I'm sorry but the regulations don't allow that.

I'm afraid that is against our policy.

I'm sorry, that can't be done.

No, we can't make exceptions to the rules.

25. DIRECTING A CONVERSATION TO A CLOSE

Bringing a conversation to a close can be very difficult on the telephone. In face-to-face conversation, you can use tactics such as looking at your watch, shuffling papers, or looking downwards to bring a conversation to a close. Over the phone you need verbal tactics. You can use the following gambits to direct a conversation to a close.

DIRECTING TO A CLOSE:

Well, I'd better let you go.

Could I phone you back when I have more time?

Sorry I've got to cut this short but... (+ explanation)

I guess I should get back to work ...

Well, it's been good talking to you.

I think that about wraps it up.

This has been very interesting. Thanks for calling.

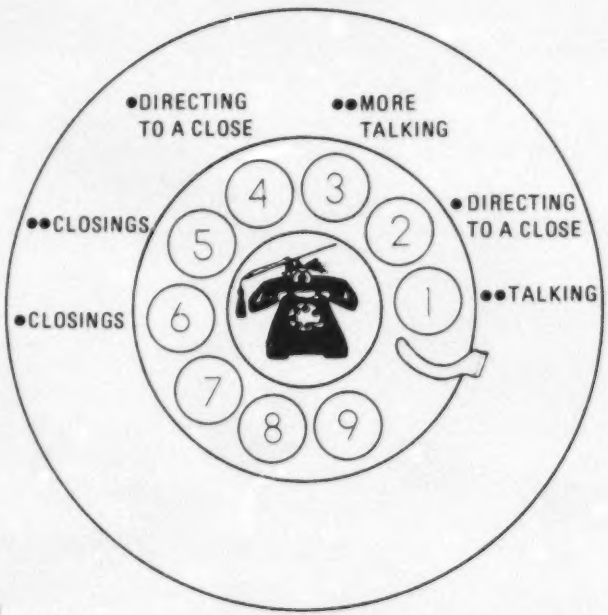
Right, O.K., we'll look into it.

Activities

☐ In pairs, write and practise a dialogue based on one of the following topics. Think about how the listener could bring the conversation to a close. Follow the steps of the Function Dial.

TOPICS:

1. A new boyfriend or girlfriend.
2. Last night's game.
3. You witnessed a car accident.
4. A long repetitious complaint about language rights.
5. On your Jamaican holiday you saw the accountant who was fired for stealing company funds.
6. You have just won a lottery.
7. Thirty centimetres of snow fell yesterday, and it took you three hours to get home.



Consolidation Exercises

The following three consolidation exercises will give you further practice in the telephone skills you have been learning. Each exercise consists of making a series of calls and filling out message slips. (See message slip to the right.)

In each exercise, participants should be divided into groups of four or more. Assign roles in each group, and then do the exercise independently in each group. To simulate a telephone interaction, participants may sit with their backs to each other.

Finally, each group should act out its series of calls to the other groups, using a Teletrainer, and putting the messages up on a chalkboard.

To – A

From – De

☐ Please call Prière d'appeler	Tel. No. – N° de tél.	Ext. – Poste
☐ Returned your call Vous a rappelé	☐ Will call again Vous rappellera	☐ Wants to see you Désire vous voir
Date	Time – Heure	Message received by Message reçu par

Message

A. A Rubber Cheque

Role 1: Barbara Evans – a secretary in the Ombudsman's Office
Role 2: Dan McDonald – the Ombudsman*
Role 3: Diane Quinn – Accounts Department, Midtown Furniture and Appliances
Role 4: Peter Jenkins – Manager, Monarch Bank
Role 5: The Receptionist – Monarch Bank
Role 6: Pat Brady – Head of Current and Chequing Accounts, Monarch Bank

Situation: Last Saturday, Barbara Evans bought a T.V. from Midtown Furniture and Appliances and paid by cheque. Monarch Bank returned the cheque, marked N.S.F.,** to Midtown Furniture.

Make the following telephone calls, filling in message slips where necessary.

CALL 1: Diane Quinn calls Barbara Evans at her office. She is not in and the message is taken by the Ombudsman.

CALL 2: Diane Quinn later receives the message from her boss and is furious because there is more than enough money in her account.
She immediately calls the manager at the Monarch Bank to give him a piece of her mind and to get the mistake corrected. To add insult to injury, the receptionist puts her on hold too long.

CALL 3: Jenkins calls Pat Brady and asks for an immediate check and a report back on the situation.

CALL 4: Pat Brady reports back that, due to a computer error, the wrong account was debited. Jenkins tells Brady to fix it with both the customer and the store.

CALL 5: Pat Brady calls the Midtown Furniture Accounts Department, explains the situation and asks them to send the cheque back to the bank.

CALL 6: Pat Brady calls Barbara Evans to apologize and to inform her that everything has been taken care of.

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* Ombudsman = Government mediator
** N.S.F. = Not sufficient funds (insufficient funds)

B. A Ride Home

Role 1: Kevin Harris – husband of Jill Harris – boss of Frances Morley – works for Hawthorne Construction Ltd.

Role 2: Jill Harris – an accountant in law firm Marcus, Walker, and Blair – wife of Kevin Harris – boss of Anita Drummond.

Role 3: Frances Morley – secretary of Kevin Harris – works at Hawthorne Construction Ltd.

Role 4: Sun Taxi dispatcher

Role 5: Anita Drummond – secretary of Jill Harris at Marcus, Walker, and Blair.

Situation: Jill and Kevin Harris have only one car. Today, Jill has it. Kevin must arrange to get a ride home.

Make the following telephone calls, filling in message slips where necessary.

CALL 1: Time: 2:15 p.m. Kevin tries to call his wife to tell her that he has to go to an urgent meeting at City Hall. His wife is at a meeting, so he leaves a message with her secretary, Anita Drummond. He would like his wife to pick him up at City Hall at 4:00.

CALL 2: Time: 3:30. Jill tries to call her husband from the Children's Hospital, to tell him their son has fallen off his bicycle and is getting 3 stitches on his knee.
Kevin's secretary, Frances Morley, explains that Kevin is at City Hall and cannot be reached.
Jill leaves a message that he is not to worry but that he should get home on his own.

CALL 3: Time 3:40. Jill calls her own secretary, Anita Drummond, to leave a message in case her husband calls. Their son has fallen off his bicycle and is getting 3 stitches at the Children's Hospital. Kevin is not to worry; Jill is with their son and will take him home. Kevin is to get home on his own.

CALL 4: Time 4:15. Kevin calls his wife's office (or his own) to find out why Jill has not come to pick him up yet.

CALL 5: Time 4:20. Kevin calls Sun Taxi for a cab.

C. A Travel Claim

Role 1: John Scott – clerk in the Travel Claims Office
Role 2: Jean Lamont – secretary to Jeffrey Fraser, a Public Relations Officer
Role 3: Emily Dent – secretary to Alvin White, Chief of the Public Relations Division
Role 4: Mark Peterson – Head of the Travel Claims Office

Situation: Jeffrey Fraser came home from a conference late at night and, as always, took a taxi to his home. Since it was summer, he was living at his cottage which is a $30.00 taxi ride from the airport. His secretary Jean Lamont is dealing with his travel claim.

Make the following telephone calls, filling in message slips where necessary.

CALL 1: John Scott, the clerk in the Travel Claims Office, calls Jean Lamont to tell her that Jeffrey Fraser's claim for $30.00 must be reduced to his usual $5.00 ride home. Jean takes the message to her boss.

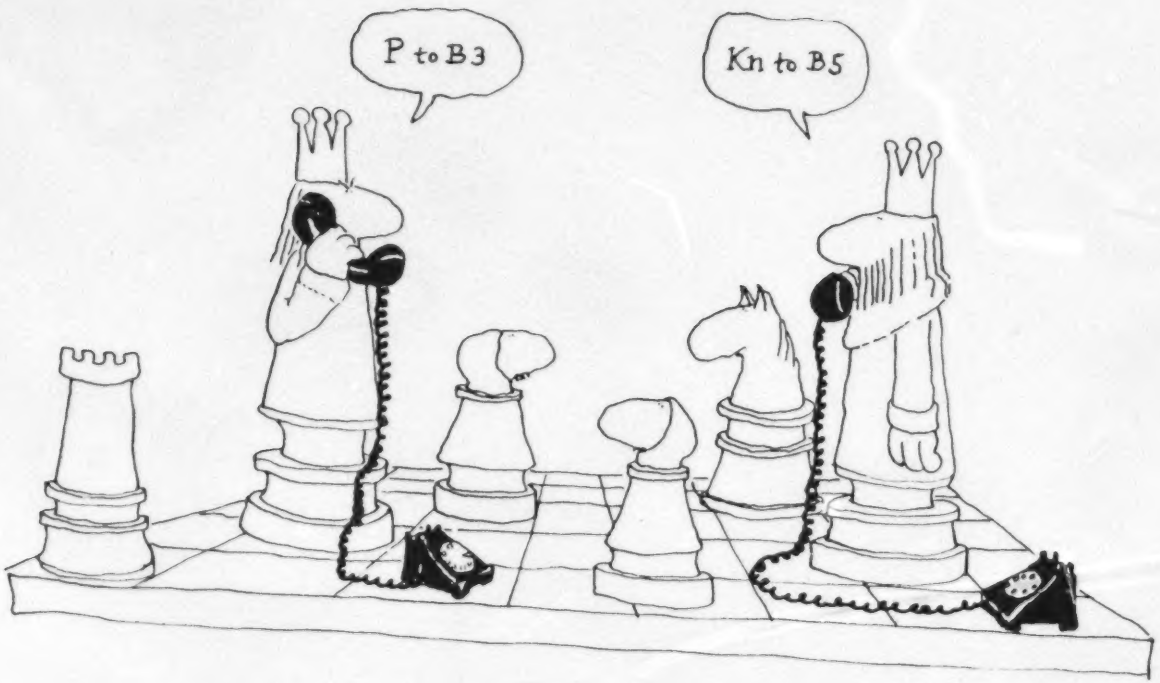
CALL 2: At the instruction of her boss, Jeffrey Fraser, Jean Lamont calls the Chief of her Division to check on what to do about the travel claim. She explains to the Chief's secretary, Emily Dent, that the Travel Claims Office has asked that the claim be reduced. Emily takes the message to her boss, Alvin White.

CALL 3: Emily Dent calls Jean Lamont to tell her that the Chief of the Division feels that under the circumstances the travel claim of $30.00 is all right. Jean takes the message to Jeffrey Fraser.

CALL 4: On the instructions of her boss, Jeffrey Fraser, Jean Lamont calls John Scott, the clerk in the Travel Claims Office, to tell him that the Chief of the Division feels that the travel claim of $30.00 should be paid under the circumstances.

CALL 5: John Scott calls his boss, Mark Peterson, to ask if he should allow a $30.00 travel claim for a taxi-ride home from the airport because the Chief of the Public Relations Division felt that it was justified in this case. Mark Peterson makes the final decision. (Student playing the role of Mark decides whether to refuse or to grant the travel claim and gives reasons for his decision.)

CALL 6: John Scott calls Emily Dent to inform her of his boss's decision on the travel claim, and asks her to pass the message on to her boss Alvin White, as well as to Jean Lamont for her boss Jeffrey Fraser.



Phoney Gambits

Further Reading for the Teacher

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